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## □ Editorial

Dear readers,

The first issue of Reading Primers International, published in December 2009, has received a warm welcome. This feedback has encouraged the editors to plan the publication of three issues of RPI in 2010. We wish to thank all those who have sent us comments and proposals, and we extend our thanks and appreciation to those RP-SIG members who have contributed to this second issue: Eva Balz, Berlin (Germany), Juris Cibuljs, Riga (Latvia), Wolfgang Fickert, Erlangen (Germany), Honoré Vinck, Lovenjoel (Belgium) and Joanna Wojdon, Wrocław (Poland).

Our sincere thanks go to Robert C. Calfee, professor emeritus, Stanford University (USA) for his paper on "American Primers: The Collections of Richard Lawrence Venezky" and to Elżbieta Alina Jakimik, doctoral student in cultural studies at the Warsaw School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Warsaw (Poland) for providing information about primers for Polish and Carpathian Roma.

We hope that you enjoy reading this issue, and, as always, we look forward to your feedback and to your ideas.

May 1, 2010

*Vitaly Bezrogov & Wendelin Sroka*

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- **RP-SIG News**
- **Developments and plans**

The Reading Primers Special Interest Group was launched in September 2009 as a virtual network, designed as a forum for researchers, librarians, collectors, publishers, authors and others. The Provisional Executive Board published a first issue of "Reading Primers International" in December 2009, and it initiated and supported joint activities of members as laid down in the "preliminary profile" of the network. Seven months after the start of RP-SIG, the Board is happy to present this interim report:

#### **International bibliography of studies on reading primers and elementary readers**

RP-SIG plans to publish an "International bibliography of studies on reading primers and elementary readers". The main purpose of this bibliography is to raise awareness and provide information about the wealth of studies on reading primers and elementary readers at international level. To enhance information this bibliography will include literature in a considerable number of languages, with titles of studies written in languages other than English translated into English. A first draft of this bibliography was sent to RP-SIG members in March 2010, and the editors have already received many suggestions for additional entries. The editors wish to thank all colleagues for their contributions. A revised draft will be sent out in June, and the editors plan to produce a first web-based version of the bibliography in autumn 2010.

#### **Towards a definition of the reading primer**

Wolfgang Fickert, Erlangen (Germany) has taken the initiative of developing a first proposal of an internationally applicable definition of the reading primer. This document has also been made available to RP-SIG members in March 2010. Communication within RP-SIG demonstrates the use of such an endeavour for international comparative research.

#### **RP-SIG Collectors' Page**

Through its Collectors' Page, RP-SIG wishes to support the advancement of collections of primers, elementary readers and related material. The page provides a platform for those who want to exchange duplicates. Moreover it informs about planned and ongoing primer exhibitions. A first version of the Collectors' Page is now available online.

[www.schulbuch-gesellschaft.de/en/files/RP-SIG-collectors-page\\_1.pdf](http://www.schulbuch-gesellschaft.de/en/files/RP-SIG-collectors-page_1.pdf)

#### **Communication within RP-SIG**

RP-SIG has been launched by means of virtual communication, and it turns out that for the time being this will be the main mode of interaction. We had to give up our plan to organise a first workshop in summer 2010, due to the fact that the organisers did not reach the critical mass of prospective participants. However, we are pleased to observe a thriving culture of communication within RP-SIG. We give our sincere thanks to all members who have positively responded to requests, especially by our student members, and who have kindly provided support and advice.

To keep RP-SIG members informed about recent developments of the network, the Provisional Executive Board has so far sent out two circulars, and it will continue to prepare and distribute circulars in the future.

#### **General assembly of RP-SIG**

The first general assembly of our network will take place in the context of the 2010 Annual Conference of the International Society for Historical and Systematic Research on Schoolbooks RS in Ichenhausen (Bavaria), September 30 – October 2, 2010.

<http://www.schulbuch-gesellschaft.de/en/content.php?contentid=67>

## Membership development

The Reading Primers Special Interest Group continues to grow slowly but steadily, in terms of the number of its members, of the integration of expertise from a variety of professional backgrounds and of the countries covered. At present, the network has 18 members in nine countries: Belgium (1), Denmark (1), Estonia (2), Finland (1), Georgia (1), Germany (6), Latvia (1), Poland (2) and Russia (3). Persons with an interest to join the network should feel encouraged to consult and send in the Membership Form.

<http://www.schulbuch-gesellschaft.de/en/content.php?contentid=103>

### □ New members

Eva **Balz**, Berlin (Germany) is a student of Modern and Contemporary History and a student researcher at Humboldt-University in Berlin. The main focus of her studies is the Social History of National Socialist Germany and Soviet Russia, but she is also interested in German, Russian and US-American intellectual history and theoretical approaches towards history. She is currently working on her final thesis for the *Magister Artium* degree, a comparative analysis of primers as instruments for the implementation of political ideology into everyday life in the Soviet Union between 1933 and 1941 and in Germany between 1933 and 1939. Her main interest in this context is the communication of different concepts of the family and its role. E-mail: [evabalz@hotmail.de](mailto:evabalz@hotmail.de)

Peter **Jessen**, Søborg (Denmark), works as a multilingual coordinator at the *BiblioteksCenter* for Integration of the State and University Library in Copenhagen. He studies and collects primers for linguistic minorities, with a special focus on minorities in the Far North. E-mail: [pjessen@net.telenor.de](mailto:pjessen@net.telenor.de)

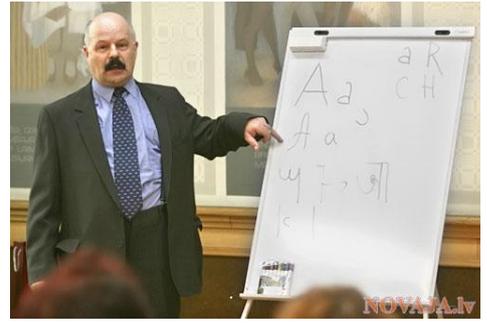
Maya **Kobalia**, Tbilisi (Georgia) has earned a BA with distinction in International Relations, Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences, at Ilia Chavchavadze State University, Tbilisi, in 2007. During her BA studies she had been an exchange student at the University of Lodz, Poland, and "Polska dla Najlepszych" program winner at the Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland. Currently she is enrolled in the Baltic Studies Masters Programme at the University of Tartu, Estonia. Her research interests, among others, encompass reading primers in cross-cultural, historical and international perspectives, and the working title of her MA dissertation is "ABC books as more than just having fun: analysis of Estonian and Polish ABC books in a cross-cultural and international perspective". E-Mail: [maya.kobalia@gmail.com](mailto:maya.kobalia@gmail.com)

Tuija **Laine**, Dr., Helsinki (Finland), is a lecturer in church and book history at the Faculty of Theology, Department of Church History, of the University of Helsinki. She has authored numerous studies on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Finnish books, with a focus on book trade, readers and religious books, and she has also published on Finnish primers from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century and on old Finnish catechisms, which have been used besides primers in education provided by the church. Her current research projects include religious reading in Finland and books and other printed material – especially primers and children's books – as a vehicle of indoctrination and propaganda. E-mail: [tuija.laine@helsinki.fi](mailto:tuija.laine@helsinki.fi)

Honoré **Vinck**, Dr., Bierbeek (Belgium), studied Catholic theology in Paris, where he obtained his PhD in 1971. Between 1972 and 1999 he lived and worked in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as a Catholic missionary and as director of the *Centre Æquatoria* research center in Bamanya. In 1980 he relaunched the journal *Æquatoria*, which had been discontinued in 1962, under the new title *Annales Æquatoria*. He is presently a member of the Belgian Royal Academy of Overseas Sciences and of the *Centrum voor historische pedagogie* at the *Katholieke Universiteit Leuven*, Belgium. He is the editor in chief of *Annales Æquatoria*. His research focuses on African colonial schoolbooks and on the history of school education in the former Belgian Congo. E-mail: [vinck.aequatoria@skynet.be](mailto:vinck.aequatoria@skynet.be);  
URL: <http://www.aequatoria.be/>; [www.abbol.com](http://www.abbol.com)

## Members' news

On February 18, 2010, Juris **Cibuļs** (Riga, Latvia) gave a lecture on issues of languages and language policy at the Academic Library in Jelgava (Latvia). The lecture, well received by the public and by the press, was connected with an exhibition of primers, based on Cibuļs' collection. A report about the event (in Russian), written by Jelena Shaldajeva, and a picture gallery are available through the website of novaja.lv.



[http://www.novaja.lv/portals/photogallery/raksts.html?xml\\_id=8184](http://www.novaja.lv/portals/photogallery/raksts.html?xml_id=8184)

Eva **Matthes**, Prof. Dr., (Augsburg, Germany) will be co-editor (with Prof. Dr. Gisela Miller-Kipp, University of Düsseldorf) of a special issue of the German periodical "*Bildung und Erziehung*" devoted to "Educational media and research on educational media in Europe". The issue is planned to be published in March 2011.

Joanna **Wojdon**, Dr. habil. (Wrocław, Poland) has joined the editorial team of the "International bibliography of studies on reading primers and elementary readers", prepared by RP-SIG. Joanna Wojdon has a new e-mail address: [joanna.wojdon@uni.wroc.pl](mailto:joanna.wojdon@uni.wroc.pl).

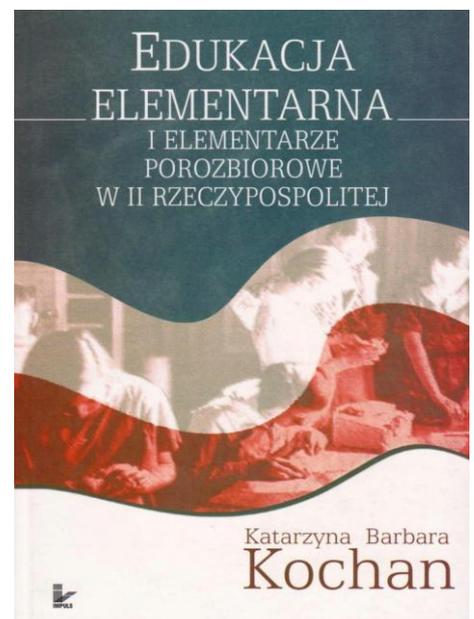
## Research

### New Book

#### Primers in Poland 1918-1939

*Kochan, Katarzyna Barbara (2009). Edukacja elementarna i elementarze porozbiorowe w II Rzeczypospolitej [Elementary education and post-partition reading primers in the Second Republic]. Kraków: Impuls, 96 p., with 7 black-and-white illustrations.*

(jw) *Edukacja elementarna i elementarze porozbiorowe w II Rzeczypospolitej* by Katarzyna Barbara Kochan is one of the few Polish studies in the area of reading primers research. In the first part the author describes the school system in Poland after the First World War, paying special attention to the first grades. It reflects some problems the school system had to face and shows the ways they were dealt with, e.g. the lack of qualified teachers, one-classroom schools etc. The achievements and shortcomings of elementary education for illiterate adults (who were quite numerous in Poland at those times) are also discussed. Regrettably, in this part of her book Kochan does not refer to sources other than statistical data and official documents of the ministry of education.



The part of the book related to the post-partition primers is based both on the analysis of primers themselves and of the pedagogical literature of the pre-WWII period and the contemporary one. What are the post-partition primers? As far as can be understood from the text, these are the reading primers that were developed (and first published) before the First World War, when Polish territory was still partitioned between Russia, Germany and Austro-Hungary, and were still in use (for different reasons) after the war, in the independent Poland.

Barbara Kochan is affiliated with the University of Zielona Góra where she wrote her PhD thesis on which "*Edukacja elementarna*" is based. Franciszek Pilarczyk, professor of the same university, was one of the readers and examiners in her PhD procedure. Pilarczyk is the author of the most detailed bibliography as well as of a study of the history of Polish reading primers.<sup>1</sup> And Kochan's book does not add too much to his research, except from splitting the primers from Pilarczyk's list into two groups: the ones that obtained a ministerial recommendation and the ones that did not. She also assigns each book a technique it promotes to teach reading and writing skills, without really explaining the techniques. It may be obvious for the reading instructors to whom the book is addressed in the first place, but other readers, including your correspondent, are not familiar with them.

Finally, Kochan briefly mentions what the texts in the primers are about. From a historical perspective this last issue would be of utmost interest, but this is the most disappointing part of the book. Much more has been said about the contents of the pre-WWII primers in the monograph by Anna Landau-Czajka<sup>2</sup> that Kochan apparently is not familiar with. More omissions both in the literature used and in the issues treated by Kochan can be pointed out. Why doesn't she mention the primers for the national minorities (or doesn't put the word "Polish" [reading primers] in the title of the book)? What about the first edition of the legendary "*Elementarz*" by Marian Falski that was printed before the Great War? Generally, a reader can expect much more from this book than he actually gets.

<sup>1</sup> Pilarczyk, Franciszek (2003). *Elementarze polskie od ich XVI-wiecznych początków do II wojny światowej: Próba monografii księgoznawczej* [Polish Primers. Since their beginnings in the 16. Century until the Second World War]. Zielona Góra: Uniwersytet Zielonogórski; Pilarczyk, Franciszek (1995). *Elementarze polskie. Materiały bibliograficzne* [Polish primers. Bibliographical material]. Zielona Góra: Wydaw. Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej im. Tadeusza Kotarbińskiego.

<sup>2</sup> Landau-Czajka, Anna (2002). *Co Alicja odkrywa po własnej stronie lustra: życie codzienne, społeczeństwo, władza w podręcznikach dla dzieci najmłodszych 1785-2000*. [What does Alice discover on her side of the mirror: everyday life, society, authority in the primary textbooks 1785-2000] Warszawa: Neriton.

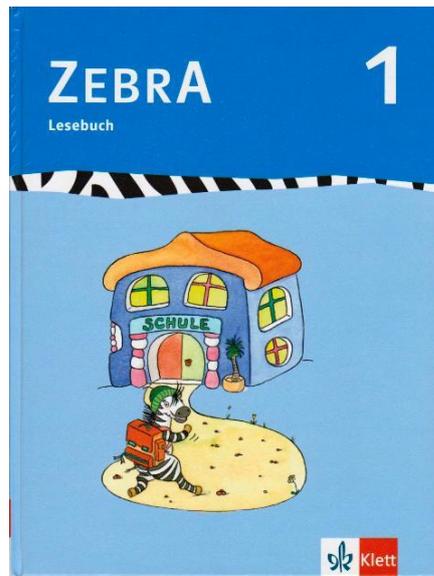
## □ Survey

### Analysis of contemporary German primers

*Wissenschaftliche Analyse von aktuellen Fibeln, Sprachbüchern und Sprachlehrwerken für den Deutschunterricht (Klasse 1 & 2). Gutachten für die Anton-Bruckner-Grundschule Ludwigsburg* [Scientific analysis of current primers, language textbooks and study sets for German classes (grades 1 and 2). Survey for the „Anton Bruckner" primary school, Ludwigsburg]. Erarbeitet von Studierenden der Pädagogischen Hochschule Ludwigsburg, Sommersemester 2009, Seminar "Fibel- und Sprachbuchkritik" unter der Leitung von Prof. Dr. Stefan Jeuk. Ludwigsburg: Pädagogische Hochschule 2009, 135 p.

(ws) This comparative textbook analysis is the product of a remarkable effort. It presents the results of a teacher training course, organised at the Ludwigsburg University of Education (Baden-Württemberg, Germany) in summer semester 2009 for students with a specialisation in German classes at primary schools. In early 2009, a teacher of Ludwigsburg's „Anton Bruckner" primary school had asked Dr. Stefan Jeuk, junior professor at the Institute of Languages, German Department, for advice to select new textbooks for German classes in grades 1 and 2. Jeuk, wishing to positively respond to this request, organised a course "analysis of primers and language textbooks", with 59 teacher students eventually involved in project work.

As agreed with the primary school, 10 textbooks for German classes were analysed for grades 1 and 2 each. The primers considered in this survey include, with the names of the publisher in brackets: *ABC der Tiere* (Mildenberger), *Auer Fibel* (Auer), *Bausteine Fibel* (Diesterweg), *Konfetti Klasse 1* (Diesterweg), *Kunterbunt Klasse 1* (Klett), *LolliPop Fibel* (Cornelsen), *Löwen-*



*Zebra 1, elaborated by a group of authors (Stephanie Brettschneider et al.), published in 2007 by Klett, Stuttgart, was declared the best of ten contemporary German primers evaluated in this survey.*

*zahn und Pusteblume Klasse 1 & 2* (Schroedel), *Piri Fibel* (Klett), *TINTO Klasse 1* (Cornelsen) and *Zebra 1* (Klett). Based on a common analytical framework and on consistent standards of evaluation, groups of usually 3 students analysed and reviewed a grade level textbook program and compiled individual reports. As part of the evaluation, credit points were assigned for eight areas covered by the evaluation, from 1 point ("less recommended") through 2 points ("basically suitable") to 3 points ("highly recommended"). Only textbooks which were part of a series for at least grades 1 and 2 were included in this survey, and the working groups focusing on textbook programs of the same series were expected to cooperate. Based on the individual reports the course leader elaborated the comprehensive parts of the survey.

With reference to the situation in Germany, Jeuk states that "following an intensive discussion in the 1970s, current literature on the analysis of primers and language textbooks is rather rare" (p. 2f.). Considering this fact, but also the limitations of time and methodological expertise of those who compiled the individual reports, vis-à-vis the enormous scope of this survey, your correspondent is very much inclined to stress the wealth of insights the survey provides (especially for those of us who often tend to follow a somewhat limited perspective of primerology), rather than concentrating on weaknesses of such type of text when measured by strictly academic criteria.

A first area of insights is the degree to which the textbooks for grades 1 and 2 are linked with each other. As the survey concludes: While the textbooks in many cases are closely interlocked with each other, a more detailed look reveals three types of such links. The first type is represented by series of integrated textbooks for German classes, providing opportunity to work with the textbook in more than just one grade, didactically based on the language experience approach (*Spracherfahrungsansatz*), no longer distinguishing between language instruction and reading instruction and separate textbooks for these areas, as instruction used to be organised in the past at least from grade 2. A second group is made up of textbook series which, while following an integrated approach and using an integrated primer for grade 1, still split up the textbooks for grade 2 into a language book (*Sprachbuch*) and a reader (*Lesebuch*). The third type of textbooks is characterised by series of textbooks which are at most only loosely coupled, often with different teams of authors for grade 1 and grade 2 textbooks, and often with a clear distinction between written language acquisition as the task of language instruction in grade 1 and spelling and grammar instruction as the task of instruction in grade 2.

In conjunction with that, the survey presents a finding which is of interest in the context of the current RP-SIG discourse on the definition and "identity" of the primer: In five of ten cases the basic book of the grade 1 textbook program is called "*Fibel*" (primer), whereas in the other cases this book is presented as "*Lesebuch*" (reader) or "*Leselernbuch*" (literally: 'textbook for learning to read'). This fact – and we observe similar developments in some other countries as well – can be seen as a reaction to the changing context and demands of beginning reading instruction, with changes in the function and design of textbooks well worth studying.

## Olja

Olja lebt in Moskau.  
 Moskau ist die Hauptstadt von  
 Russland.  
 Am liebsten isst Olja Blinys.  
 Das sind Pfannkuchen.  
 Oft besucht sie ihre Oma.  
 Sie sagt zu ihr Babuschka.  
 So schreibt Olja ihren Namen: Оля.  
 Das ist kyrillisch.



*Bliny, Babushka and Оля: multilingualism in a German primer. Detail from: Kerstin Berktold et al.: Die Auer Fibel. Ausgabe S. Donauwörth: Auer, 1. edition 2004, p. 81. The detail is part of a chapter entitled "Our world", with texts and pictures introducing Winnie in New York, Leo in Stuttgart, Burak in Istanbul, Antonio in Rome and Esta in Tansania.*

The analytical framework used for the analysis of the textbooks is another issue of this survey well worth studying. The framework includes ten broad criteria, often composed of a large number of aspects: a) assembly of the textbook program and components, b) conceptual issues, c) makeup and structure of the individual parts, d) content-specific criteria, e) illustrations and aesthetics, f) relation to educational standards, g) didactical aspects, h) methodical aspects, i) suitability of the textbook program for instruction of children with a migration background, k) additional material.

How do contemporary primers respond to the multilingual and multicultural reality in Germany's classrooms? How do the textbook programs contribute to support children with German as a second language to develop appropriate skills in the school language? The survey stresses the importance of these questions, and they undoubtedly point to major challenges both for contemporary classroom practice and school policy in Germany. According to the authors, only one grade 1 textbook program – *Zebra* – combines additional material for language support with a primer which has a clear intercultural orientation and provides specific role models for children with a migration background. As concluded in the summary: "It is disappointing that the textbook programs in general contain very limited resources for multilingual classrooms. Language support is apparently still seen as an isolated task, quite separate from written language acquisition and hence from instruction in German in grade 1." (p. 10)

Intercultural orientation is also the core standard of this survey when it comes to evaluate textbook content. The summary critically states that "in the end all textbook programs are directed towards middle class children, and not a single textbook manages to reproduce the spectrum of intercultural classrooms" (p. 8). It is the expectation that textbooks have to deliver a true picture of (social, political etc.) reality which marks a weakness of this survey. For one, we miss a reflection on the nature of textbook content as a construct and as a result of the selection of topics as well as explicit and implicit norms, and we miss a deeper reflection on the function of the school in society. Second, in view of the rigidity of the standards applied in textbook evaluation, it is remarkable that the authors seem to have little trust in the competence of their professional group to appropriately and creatively use educational tools under specific classroom conditions.

As regards textbook content, "*Auer Fibel*" is classified as "less recommended" (1 point). According to the survey, "it is eye-catching that the children presented as role models (*leitende Kinderfiguren*) as well as the majority of the other children depicted in the primer have a 'typically German' appearance



*Underperforming as regards the representation of social heterogeneity? Another detail from "Die Auer Fibel" (see picture above), p. 63. These are two out of seven scenes devoted to the theme "Who is my friend?" and "Real friends?". The first scene shows Julian and Tim (in a wheel-chair) playing "hare and hunter", the second scene is about Kemal and George. Kemal, who at first sits alone, is eventually joined by George, who two days later says: "I have learnt a Turkish word: arkadaş. It means friend."*

serious interdisciplinary research on primers and textbooks, grounded not only on academic curiosity but also on the need to do justice both to the demanding work of textbook authors and to classroom practice.

and come from a typically middle class family ('mum, dad, child, cat')" (p. 25). The evaluators criticize that foreign children are represented "only in their own countries" (- this is not even the case, as the scene with Kemal and George on p. 63 demonstrates; see picture to the left). They sum up in suggesting that "most children, especially those from migrant and patchwork families and children from single mothers and father will presumably (!) not be able to identify with the role models in the primer" (ibid.).

Conclusions like that, lacking both an appropriate theoretical and any true evidence base, may tell us more about the authors than about the object of their study. This once again underlines the need – as called for, amongst others, by Jeuk himself – of

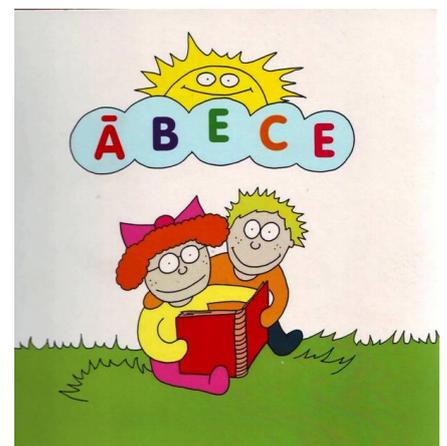
## □ Diploma thesis

### Interaction between textual and visual material in Latvian primers

*Jana Ločmele: Tekstuālā un vizuālā materiāla mijiedarbība ābecē [Interaction of Textual and Visual Material in the primer]. Rīga: Latvijas Universitāte, Pedagoģijas un psiholoģijas fakultāte, Izglītības zinātņu nodaļa. Diploma darbs 2009*

(jc) The aims of this diploma thesis, submitted and successfully defended in 2009 at the Department of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology of the University of Latvia, Riga, are threefold: to study the primers published in the Latvian language, to find the principles of the use of graphical elements in these books and, on the basis of the findings, to create a graphical design for an ABC-book.

The diploma thesis has four main parts: In the theoretical part the author reviews the process of the book creation, the interaction of the textual and the visual material, the history and the development of the Latvian primers. In the research part the selected Latvian primers and the means of the graphic expression used in these books are analysed. In the creative part the author reflects her creative work in the developing the layout of a primer and the graphical solution of design products making use of plane-tables. Finally, the economic part comprises the calculations of the financial investment needed for developing and publishing a reading primer.



*Design of the cover for a primer, created by Jana Ločmele*

The author had observed that nowadays a lot of different primers, workbooks and supplementary materials are published; however, there is no much information on the graphical design of this educational material. The hypothetical question of the thesis is whether the means of the graphical design have become simpler in the course of time.

The majority of the primers analysed in this thesis come from Juris Cibuls' collection. This international collection comprises some 300 primers in the Latvian language. Jana Ločmele has selected and analysed some 100 of them, including the Latvian primer compiled by Juris Cibuls which was the first one published in Latvia after restoration of independence in 1991.

The main conclusion of the diploma thesis is as follows: the means of the graphical design have become simpler since for children it is easier to perceive and better to understand letters without superficial details, thus the transition has taken place from the decorative letters to the block letters, i.e., letters without serifs. Realistic illustrations, pictures or even paintings being finely done have been replaced by stylised and simplified pictures and drawings.

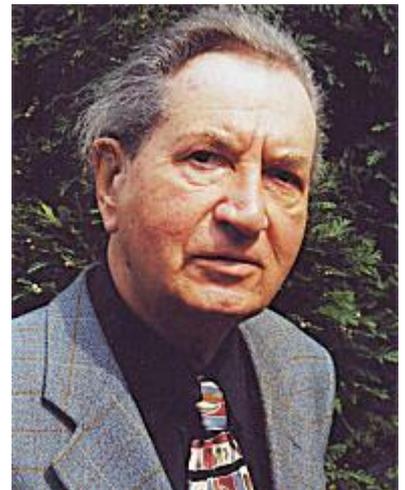
## □ Obituary

### Franz Pöggeler (1926 – 2009)

(ws) Franz Pöggeler, Prof. Dr., born 1929 in Letmathe (North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany), has been a distinguished pioneer in many areas of education in Germany and in Europe. A professor of education at the University of Aachen (Germany) from 1962 to 1992, he was one of the founders of adult education as an academic discipline. His publication record includes more than 60 books and numerous articles in the fields of pedagogy, andragogy and gerontagogy. For his achievements he has received honours from academic institutions in Germany and abroad, including the honorary PhD by the University of Leuven (Belgium).

Pöggeler was also engaged in textbook research, and with passion he collected pictures and books related to education, most notably schoolbooks and children's books. In 1997, Pöggeler donated more than 23,000 items of his textbook collection to the Bavarian School Museum in Ichenhausen. At this occasion, researchers from Belgium and Germany organised an international colloquium on textbook research which marks the birth of the International Society of Historical and Systematic Research on Schoolbooks.

As a collector and as a scholar Pöggeler had a specific interest in reading primers, and his collection of schoolbooks, now housed in Ichenhausen, includes more than 600 German schoolbooks for beginning reading instruction. In the 1980s these books served as the basis of a number of well-prepared primer exhibitions, presented e.g. by the university libraries of Aachen, Bamberg, Gießen and Heidelberg and by the *Landesbibliothek Württemberg* [Württemberg Regional Library] in Stuttgart. The catalogue of the Stuttgart exhibition, edited by Markus May and Robert Schweitzer in 1982 and reprinted in 1984<sup>1</sup> even today is a valuable source for collectors and researchers of German primers.



Pöggeler's interest in primers focused on the political content of these textbooks. His contributions to this area of textbook research include the talk "On the change of political contents in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century primers", held at the Bavarian School Museum in Ichenhausen in 1985, a study on "Politics in primers", published in 1985<sup>2</sup> and an essay "Primers and *Zeitgeist*", included

in the exhibition catalogue mentioned above. – Franz Pöggeler passed away in October 2009 in Aachen.

<sup>1</sup> May, Markus & Robert Schweitzer (1984). *Wie die Kinder lesen lernten. Die Geschichte der Fibel. Ausstellungskatalog. Ausstellung der Württembergischen Landesbibliothek in Zusammenarbeit mit der Sammlung Pöggeler* [How the children learned to read. The history of the primer. Exhibition catalogue. Exhibition of the Württemberg Regional Library in cooperation with the Pöggeler collection]. Stuttgart, 2., verbesserte und erweiterte Auflage 1984. 277 p.

<sup>2</sup> Pöggeler, Franz (1985). *Politik in Fibeln* [Politics in primers]. // Franz Pöggeler (ed.). *Politik im Schulbuch*. Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, pp. 21-50.

## □ Country Notes

### □ Congo (Democratic Republic)/ Belgium

#### **Primers and elementary readers from the former Belgian Congo – The African Colonial Schoolbook project on the Internet sites of the Centre Aequatoria and on the site of the African Book bank online**

(hv) The documentation concerning the Congolese colonial school and education history is available in the form of a catalogue, which can be consulted on the website of the Centre Aequatoria. The catalogue refers to materials conserved in the library of the Centre Aequatoria in Bamanya, DR Congo. The materials include the collection of school books, most of which are available on microfiche. The main language of the Catalogue is French, but all directions for its use are given in both French and English. The detailed description of this fund can be reached along the URL

[http://www.aequatoria.be/archives\\_project/Catalogue/FrameSetEcoles.html](http://www.aequatoria.be/archives_project/Catalogue/FrameSetEcoles.html)

The African Book bank online (formerly Aequatoria Book bank online) offers texts that are difficult to find in traditional libraries. The texts are of particular interest to researchers working on the history of African (colonial) schoolbooks. The complete Colonial School Book Project can be accessed on: <http://www.abbol.com/>. On the home page, navigate to the different components from the menus. General introductions have been written in English and French, but the texts themselves are mainly in French.

The 'Centre Aequatoria' has a collection of more than 600 school books and religious textbooks in 37 Congolese languages. The oldest of these books date back to 1897. Since 1995, fifty-five booklets have been entirely translated into French. Thirty-seven of them are now available online on [http://www.abbol.com/commonfiles/docs\\_projecten/colschoolbks/ecole.htm](http://www.abbol.com/commonfiles/docs_projecten/colschoolbks/ecole.htm).

Each school book is introduced by a technical sheet with all important descriptive data. Amongst others there is a thematic anthology and a large collection of reading primers in the lingala (Guthrie C 36), lomongo (Guthrie C 61) and lingombe (Guthrie C 41) languages.

1. African colonial schoolbooks: An anthology. English version *Manuels scolaires coloniaux: Un florilège*. Version française [Publié dans *Annales Aequatoria* 19(1998)3-166].
2. [Buku ea Mbaanda](#) (Livre de Lecture). Missionnaires du S. Cœur, Mbandaka, 1935. Traduction française du lomongo.
3. [Exercices de langage](#). Frères Maristes, Buta, 1930. Texte français du texte bilingue français-lingala.
4. [Buku na kutanga o lingala. Buku III](#). [Livre de lecture en lingala. Livre III], Maristes, Buta, 1927. Traduction française du lingala.
5. [Lectures choisies pour jeunes écoliers africains](#), Baptist Missionary Society, Yakusu, 1954. Texte original français.
6. [Bonkanda wa mbaanda](#) [Livre de lecture], Pères Trappistes, Mbandaka, 1908 et 1917. Traduction française du lomongo.

7. Etude et textes de *Buku ea eandelo I* [Livre de lecture I] et *Buku ea eandelo II* [Livre de lecture II] en traduction française du lomongo avec une Bibliographie des manuels scolaires congolais.
8. *Buku ea eandelo la ekotelo. Buku II*. [Livre de lecture et d'écriture. Livre II], Missionnaires du S. Cœur, Mbandaka, 1933. Reproduction numérisée de l'original en lomongo. Voir la traduction française sous n. 7.
9. [Tokoyekola lingala, Buku ya yambo](#). [Apprenons le lingala. Premier livre], Frères de St Gabriel, Bondo, 1937. Reproduction numérisée de l'original en lingala.
10. [Buku na botangi I, 2](#) [Livre de lecture]; H. Proost, Turnhout, Belgique. Apostolisch Vikariaat Niangara. Paters Dominikanen, s.d. Traduction française du bangala.
11. [Buku na botangi II/2 mpe 3](#) [Livre de lecture II/2 et 3]; Apostolisch Vikariaat Niangara. Paters Dominikanen. Niangara, 1952. Traduction française du bangala.
12. [Buku na kuyekola botangi na lokoma o lingala Buku II](#), [Livre pour apprendre à lire et à écrire en lingala], Procure des Frères Maristes, Buta, sans date [1937?]. Traduction française du bangala.
13. [Toyekola lingala, Buku ya yambo](#) [Apprenons le lingala. Premier livre], Frères des St Gabriel, Bondo, 1937. Traduction française du bangala.
14. [Bonkanda wa mbaanda w'Ecole etat'ea bafe](#), [Livre de lecture d'école. 2e partie] Traduction française du lomongo de Bolongo, DCCM, 1924.
15. [Buku e boikoa, bolanga na bokwolo. Buku II](#), [Livre pour apprendre la lecture et l'écriture. Livre II] Traduction française du lingombe de Basankusu, Mill Hill, 1960.
16. [Manuel pour apprendre le français aux élèves de l'Ecole Primaire Congolaise](#). Texte bilingue: Kikongo-français, Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes, Tumba, 1926.
17. [Premiers éléments de la langue française. Baoi ba joso ja lolaka ja français. Première partie](#). Edition bilingue: Lomongo-français, Trappistes, Bamanya, 1926.

#### □ Poland: primers in Romani

#### Primers for Polish Roma (*Polska Roma*) and Carpatian Roma (*Bergitka Roma*)

Karol Parno Gierliński: *Miri szkoła – Romano elementaro. Podręcznik pomocniczy dla dzieci z grupy Polska Roma. Kostrzyn nad Odrą: Urząd Miasta w Kostrzynie nad Odrą. Wydanie II, 2008, 100 p.*

Karol Parno Gierliński: *Miri szkoła – Romano elementaris. Podręcznik pomocniczy dla dzieci z grupy Romów Górskich – Bergitka Roma. Kostrzyn nad Odrą: Urząd Miasta w Kostrzynie nad Odrą. Wydanie I, 2008, 100 p.*

(eaj) There are not too many Roms in Poland today, around 20 thousand according to the maximum estimates. Their population dwindled after the collapse of the communist regime in 1989 as a result of their emigration to Great Britain, Ireland, Germany, Sweden, USA and Canada. According to the population census data, in 2002 - 12 855 people declared themselves as Romani and 15 788 used Romani language at home.



Despite this demographic development, the number of books addressed to the Romani children in Poland has been growing since 2007. Apparently, the Roms have become aware that overcoming education deficits is the best way to grant them appropriate social status.



Picture of a family in the Romano elementaris (primer in *Bergitka Roma*)

There are two other books for the youngest Romani children. They are bi-lingual publications, written in Polish and Romani. The first one is "Ilustrowana encyklopedia małego Roma" (Illustrated encyclopedia of the little Rom) by Anna Kopycińska. Anna Szymańska, an expert in educational problems of Romani children, of Romani origin herself, authored an exercise-book "Piszę, czytam, rysuję" (I write, I read, I draw). Romani fairy tales, Romane paramisia, written in Polish and in Romani dialect Carpatian Roma by Jan Mirga, are also worth mentioning. A comic book, "Romowie – Roma – Romanies", with pictures of their ancestors' past, can also be of interest to the young Romanis.

On the course of the development of the reading primers edition a decision regarding spelling rules had to be made. After lengthy discussions it was agreed that the so-called Warsaw alphabet, developed by Professor Marcel Courthiade as a transcription tool for all the Romani dialects, is of little use for the young Romanis living in Poland. The Warsaw alphabet consists of 46 characters, including Latin and Greek letters. A new alphabet was elaborated using letters of the Polish alphabet; this alphabet can represent sounds of both west Slavonic languages and local Romani dialects.

Most publications discussed in this article, including the primers, are available online at a Romani culture and education portal at [www.elementaro.org](http://www.elementaro.org).

Karol Parno Gierliński, a Romani poet and sculptor, and at the same time author of two Romani reading primers, is the most outstanding Romani children's writer in Poland. So far, Gierliński has developed versions for Polish Roma (*Polska Roma*) and for Carpathian Roma (*Bergitka Roma*) groups. They were designed not only as reading tools, but also as carriers of language and tradition that are determinants of Romani ethnic consciousness. The contents of the primers should also help their readers live within the Polish social environment.

In order to make the primers more attractive, the author tried to make reading instruction fun, and therefore large parts of the primers are put into the game format. The reading primers were printed in the book form, and were also included in the multimedia textbook published on DVD, entitled "Miri szkoła". There are Romani vocabulary and basic math skills texts on the disc, alongside with material for older readers pertaining to Romani culture, traditional professions, women's social status, elements of law, etc.



The Lord's Prayer in the *Bergitka Roma* dialect

## □ Letters

### Reprints of Finnish primers

Wolfgang Fickert, Erlangen

The numerous reprints of 20<sup>th</sup> century primers may give an impression of the widespread interest in primers that can be observed in Finland. Most Finnish town libraries are equipped with a good choice of reading primers in the children's department – including several reprints – and an interested visitor will be offered to have brought older items from the archive. Up to now some ten different 20<sup>th</sup> century Finnish primers have been reprinted with up to ten consequent editions. This adds up to the reprints of older primers, including

Mikael Agricola's "Abckiria, the first printed book in the Finnish language, published in 1543, and at least three from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Reprints of primers are usually published by the same companies as were the original prints. Therefore it is sometimes difficult to identify them as such. For example, "*Kodin ja koulun ensimmäinen Kirja*" [First book for home and school] by Linda Pylkänen was first published with Martha Wendelin's illustrations as 12<sup>th</sup> print in 1931. The 16<sup>th</sup> print 1950 was followed 1994 by the 17<sup>th</sup> print, without declaring it as "näköispainos" [reprint]. A good reason for reprinting this primer was the delicate illustrations by Wendelin (1893 - 1986), two of which were also shown on postal stamps in 1992. Michael Agricola, author of the 1543 primer mentioned above, was honoured too by a stamp in 1982, which in the background shows the title page of his primer.

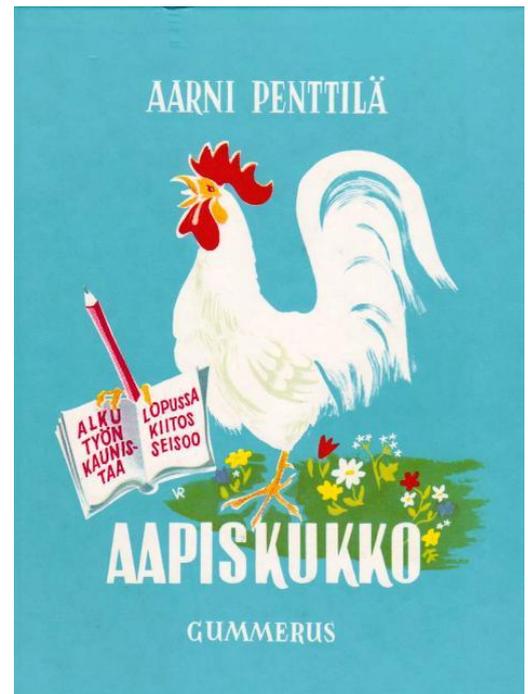
To acquire an original issue of any Finnish primer that was reprinted later on, a collector has to be quite lucky. Second hand booksellers in Finland usually keep a list of good customers to whom they show new entries first. Even flea market dealers know the value of old primers by now. There seem to be quite a number of primers' collectors in Finland. On the other hand, the result of an enquiry with antiquarian booksellers all over the country shows that there have been no requests for foreign primers during the last years.

### **The study primers from the perspective of a student of history**

*Eva Balz, Berlin*

Being a student of Modern and Contemporary History, I have been dealing, or at least been in touch, with a number of different types of sources. My decision to use primers as main sources for my final thesis is due to manifold reasons: I was looking for a way to analyze the respective system's methods of implementing political ideology into everyday life in Stalinism and National Socialism. In this context, School textbooks in general seem to be very obvious examples of direct links between the state and its citizen. In primers, however, contents need to be conveyed especially clearly in order to be effective, due to the average 1<sup>st</sup>-grader's limited reading abilities. The role of semantics and their interrelation with illustrations, for that reason, can not be overestimated.

Despite their simple character of display, the primers' special significance is not easy to analyze for a historian. Individual elements need to be contextualized and traced back to their original roots before conclusions can be drawn. What, for instance, may seem to be an obvious feature of National Socialism, can actually be inherited from the Weimar Republic and should not mislead the researcher to state "typical" characteristics of this political system in a primer's design. It is this combination of simplicity and delusion which makes primers so fascinating for me. Thoughtfulness and concise method are necessary, in order to actually learn from them. I believe to have chosen a very exciting and challenging type of source.



*The first edition of "Aapiskukko" [The primer rooster], compiled by the Finnish linguist Aarni Penttilä (1899–1971), was printed in 1938. Gummerus Publishing House, based in Jyväskylä, published the 18<sup>th</sup> edition in 1998.*

I am very happy that I was met with a warm reception in the Reading Primers Special Interest Group. Since I am new in the field of primer research, I am very much looking forward to find out about different approaches towards this type of source. I am curious about the various research projects connected to the group members, and about taking part in the exchange of ideas. Already, I owe some members gratitude for their generous help and inspiration. The support I experienced by now makes me hope for further valuable comments, constructive criticism, and interesting links to other disciplines. Within my limitations, I shall happily return the same to you and contribute to this useful and worthwhile network.

## □ Finds

*When you thumb through a primer – old or new, domestic or foreign – it may occasionally happen that you stop, captivated by a picture, a text or both. You may laugh, you may get appalled, you may wonder, you may give some thought to the topic. Eventually, you may wish to share what you found and what you think about it. RPI's new section "finds" gives room for all that. Basically, any topic related to primers and not suitable for other parts of this newsletter may be considered for the new section. In addition we encourage the development of thematic areas.*

*We start this section with a piece under the heading "Others". The picture of "the other" is a well-known topic in textbook research, and often primers are good sources in this respect. In the future, contributions under this heading may also refer to e.g. other languages, other scripts, other religions. Again, our readers are cordially invited to contribute.*

## "Others"

### **A trip to the Netherlands, as described in a 1969 (West) German primer**

(ws) *"Der fröhliche Wagen"* [The jolly carriage] is a primer originally published in the 1950s by August Bagel, Düsseldorf. The first edition was "created by a working group", illustrated by Herbert Mende and "approved for use in schools by North Rhine Westphalia's Ministry of Education, July 30, 1955". The title of the textbook, underlined by the cover picture, can be seen as a motto: The world which emergent readers are supposed to discover is a world of happy travelers. As we learn right at the beginning of the textbook: *"Hans hat ein Auto, sein Auto saust. Dieter hat auch ein Auto. Sein Auto saust auch."* [John has a car, his car speeds. Dieter has also a car. His car speeds too.] Cars and other vehicles, including carriages, buses, lorries and trains, play a prominent role in the book, and the last part of the book contains four travel stories: "We drive to the small town" (pp. 65-72), "We drive to the big city" (pp. 73-83), "We drive to the village" (pp. 84-89) and "We walk into the big forest" (pp. 90-95). No names are provided for these places, but the descriptions leave no doubt that all travel activities are domestic.

A revised edition of *"Der fröhliche Wagen"* was published in 1969 by Bagel, Hirt and Viehweg, with Herbert Mende as illustrator again, but now "edited by Gerhard Bethlehem and Wilhelm Steffens". Though text and illustrations were thoroughly adapted, the basic message of happiness by travelling has remained unchanged. Chapters now include "The children see aunty Ilse to the airport" (pp. 46-47) and "Dieter joins his father to take the car to the shop" (pp. 48-49). Another major innovation is the last story which describes a cross-border journey: "The children accompany their parents on a trip to Holland" (pp. 82-87). It is a trip by car, and off go parents, five kids and Pu, the teddy bear. They take the Autobahn, have their identity cards checked at the border, and now they drive through Holland and to a fishing village. And what do they experience there? "The children see the fishing boats. They see the fishermen in their black, roomy trousers. They see the women in their old, colourful costumes. They see children dressed like grown-ups." (See detail on page 15 of RPI 2)



Nun fahren sie durch Holland.  
 Sie fahren durch Städte mit vielen schönen Häusern und Brücken.  
 Sie fahren an vielen Kanälen entlang.  
 Sie kommen an alten Mühlen vorüber.  
 Sie fahren in ein Fischerdorf.

Die Kinder sehen die Fischerboote.  
 Sie sehen die Fischer in ihren schwarzen, weiten Hosen.  
 Sie sehen die Frauen in ihren alten, bunten Trachten.  
 Sie sehen Kinder, die wie große Leute angezogen sind.

Vater und Mutter gehen mit den Kindern und Pu durch das Dorf.  
 Sie gehen durch die engen Gassen.  
 Die Häuser sind alle schmal und klein.  
 Die Kinder können in die Wohnungen hineinsehen.

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Gerhard Bethlehem, Wilhelm Steffens (eds.): *Der fröhliche Wagen. Eine neue Fibel zum Lesen- und Schreibenlernen [The jolly carriage. A new primer for learning to read and write]*. Düsseldorf: Bagel, Hirt & Viehweg 1969, p. 86

What is the message of this story? What were North Rhine Westfalian abecedarians in 1969 – two years after the creation of the European Communities – supposed to learn about their Dutch neighbours? What were they supposed to learn about “us and them”, about traditional and modern life?

In his work *Social change with respect to culture and original nature*, published in 1922, the American sociologist William F. Ogborn coined the term *cultural lag*, pointing to the delay of adaptive culture vis-à-vis the change of material culture. The “Trip to Holland” may well serve as an example where this concept can be applied to the sphere of education and textbooks: as far as textbook content lags behind social change and passes on outdated stereotypes.

## □ In Profile

### **American Primers: The Collections of Richard Lawrence Venezky**

By Robert C. Calfee, Stanford University

This note is about Stanford’s online collection, *American Primers and Readers: The Words and Collections of Richard Venezky*, <http://venezky.stanford.edu>, an introduction to arguably the most extensive and certainly the most extensively documented primer collection in the United States. A Google search of “primers” places Venezky as the first entry, followed by leads to other significant collections, including those at Indiana University ([www.libraries.iub.edu/index?pageId=1000646](http://www.libraries.iub.edu/index?pageId=1000646)), the University of Pittsburgh ([www.digital.library.pitt.edu/nietz](http://www.digital.library.pitt.edu/nietz)), and the Chall archives at Harvard ([www.lib.harvard.edu/libraries/0029FULL](http://www.lib.harvard.edu/libraries/0029FULL)). The latter collections con-

tain original documents and microfiche copies, but can be only be accessed at the site, and often for a limited time. The Venezky Collection, in contrast, provides a rich array of web-based materials, allowing ready access to facsimiles of the original materials, as well as rich annotations and interpretations of these materials. The Stanford archives also contain a variety of other historical collections of children's reading materials, including the Mary L. Schofield Collection of 10,000 children's books spanning a century and a half, which were amassed by Schofield during her career as a librarian in the Cubberly Education Library. None of these resources, however, provide such ready availability to scholars as the Venezky Collection, for which entree is supported by both technology and scholarship. To understand these features, it helps to know about Venezky and his career.

Richard Venezky was a polymath; he did many things very well. During his all too brief life (he died in 2004 at the age of 66 due to complications from leukemia), he was in turn an electrical engineer, a computer scientist, a linguist, a psychologist, and, finally, an educator, where his activities ranged from the development of reading programs to advisement for the U. S. Department of Education on policy issues. Venezky excelled in all of these areas, and, most astonishingly, was able to weave these diverse areas into meaningfully connected wholes (Trabasso, Massaro, & Calfee, 2005). His work on computer-assisted instruction, for example, combined his knowledge of computers, of reading curriculum and instruction, and of the local policy environments that determined the success or failure of such programs. Dick and I met at Stanford in 1963, after which we both moved to the University of Wisconsin, where we began a collaboration – and friendship – that lasted until his death.

## AMERICAN PRIMERS & READERS

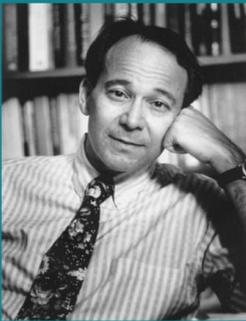
FEATURING THE WORDS AND COLLECTION OF RICHARD L. VENEZKY

*The evolution of the modern reading textbook is in part the history of American education and in part the history of American culture.*

RICHARD L. VENEZKY  
"From the *American Primers* to *Dick and I*." *American Primers*, Frederick, Md.: University Publications of America, 2000.

Richard L. Venezky (1938–2004) was a leading expert in the history of literacy and reading, whose interests "ranged from orthography to pedagogy, from adult literacy to computer-assisted instruction, from the relationship between literacy and political participation to the history of spelling and reading instructional texts."<sup>1</sup>

The Venezky Collection in the Stanford University Libraries contains American primers and readers published from the late 1700s through the middle of the twentieth century. Various editions of many titles show how they evolved over time. In addition, there are early pamphlets, chapbooks, primers, almanacs, dictionaries, children's stories, plus works on textbooks, spelling, and phonetics. Most of the works in this collection are in Special Collections, but the large microfiche collection *American Primers*, with its guide containing an introductory essay by Venezky, can be found in the Cubberly Education Library.



This exhibition follows some of the themes in Venezky's various works on the history of textbooks and reading including the historic periods that he delineated:

The evolution of the modern textbook can be traced through at least five distinct periods: Colonial (1639–1782), early national (1783–1837), pre-Civil War (1838–1865), early modern (1866–1920), and modern (1921–present).<sup>2</sup>

A companion exhibition in the Graduate School of Education building displays some of Venezky's other work including *Literacy: An International Handbook* (1999), *The American Way of Spelling* (1999), and membership in the team that created the *Speak and Spell*. As his close friend Professor Robert Calfee writes,

Venezky's scholarly agenda was both broad and deep. The contributions to the Festschrift [published in *From Orthography to Pedagogy: Essays in Honor of Richard L. Venezky*] that culminated his career illustrate, in both their breadth and the quality and depth of the works, Venezky's influence on his colleagues—which was an important mark of his role as a scholar. . . . Combining linguistics, history, cognition and learning, and joining these disciplines to the practical and policy arenas, Dick did not arrive at the answers, but he set forth the seminal questions. That is the mark of a true scholar.

<sup>1</sup> "Obituary" in *History of Reading News*, vol. 28, no. 1, Fall 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Venezky, Richard L. "Textbooks in School and Society." *Handbook of Research on Curriculum*. Ed. Philip W. Jackson. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992. 436-61.

Figure 1. Home page for Venezky Exhibit, *American Primers and Readers*, in the Library Collections, Stanford University, venezky.stanford.edu.

After his death, his widow, Karen Venezky, asked me to help her deal with the massive amount of materials in his offices at the University of Delaware and at their home. The hallmark of this accumulation was the incredibly detailed notes that he assembled for the various projects on his agenda, includ-

ing the enormous array of books and technical documents that he absorbed from his voracious reading. His attention to detail is evident in the primer collection. Venezky was not simply a packrat. He reflected deeply on the ways in which children's readers determined the style and substance of reading instruction in the United States from the early Colonial days (the mid-1600s), up through the basal reader systems of modern times (Venezky, 1992). In *"From the Indian Primer to Dick and Jane"* (1990), he noted that "The evolution of the modern reading textbook is in part the history of American education and in part the history of American culture."

The Venezky Exhibit, *Textbook as cultural artifact* (Figure 1), which was prepared by the Stanford archivists, and which is available at <http://venezky.stanford.edu/themes/textbook-as-cultural-artifact/>, presents an extended array of examples along with commentaries by Venezky supporting the basic argument sketched above. The exhibit, which includes both photographs and commentary, is organized in two basic categories: Eras and Themes. Eras are divided according to primary turning points in U. S. history. Themes cover three essential domains: *Reading as Cultural Artifact*, *The Content of Reading Instruction*, and *The Business Side of the Publication of Readers*. Each perspective receives close and insightful attention, but perhaps the most interesting is the area of Cultural Artifact.



Figure 2. Photograph from the Venezky Exhibit, Stanford University Library Collections, showing the display of textbook artifacts, commentary, and an enlarged woodprint from Sanders (1860).

A typical segment of the exhibit presents photographs that combine illustrations with sample pages, which enliven Venezky's crisp commentary. Figure 2, from Sanders (1860), includes the following remarks: "...reading has never been taught simply to advance literacy. Skill in reading, as a general competency, has always been commingled with inculcation of what to read, that is, attitude toward or preference for particular types of printed materials. For the early colonist, reading was taught for theological ends: to read and interpret Scriptures as required by Calvinist doctrine. In the post-Revolutionary period, reading was the route to good character, particularly as defined by the prevailing Protestant morality. Late in the nineteenth century, reading became the means for acquiring an appreciation of good literature, a goal which, though diluted and diffused by other goals and restrictions, remains in modern reading programs" (Venezky, 1987, p. 253).

Another example, a woodcut of a large piece of machinery, evokes a similarly insightful analysis: "...the steam press, which was perfected in the 1830s, could be operated by low-paid boys and girls and could produce 3,000 impressions per hour. ...newly built canals and roads allowed publishers to operate profitably over a larger territory than before, thus leading to a further squeeze on the small, local printing and publishing houses" (Venezky, 1990, p. 20).

The Venezky Exhibit offers a wealth of information to scholars. The website opens the door to "hard-copy" materials, original documents, microfiche records, and a range of resource texts, including Venezky's contributions along with other scholars in the area. The website is also open to the public – those who enter will find themselves in world that is by turns entertaining and informative, but always accessible and engaging. It is a world where everyone can find familiar points of contact with "the time when I learned to read," and new ways of understanding the commonplaces of these experiences. Richard Venezky lived a remarkable life, and his accomplishments, which have been beautifully captured by the Stanford archivists, are now available for posterity.

Sanders, C. W. (1860). *The school reader, Second book: Containing easy progressive lessons in reading and spelling*. New York : Ivison, Blakeman, Taylor & Co.

Trabasso, T., Massaro, D., & Calfee, R. C. (Eds.) (2005). *From orthography to school reform: A Festschrift for Richard Venezky*. Mahwah NJ: Erlbaum.

Venezky, R. L. (1987). A History of the American Reading Textbook. *Elementary School Journal*, 87(3), 246-65.

Venezky, R, L. (1990). *From the Indian Primer to Dick and Jane: American Primers*. Frederick, Md.: University Publications of America.

Venezky, R. L. (1992). Textbooks in School and Society. In *Handbook of Research on Curriculum*. P. W. Jackson, Ed., pp 436-461. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.

Note. Special thanks go to to Kathy Kerns, Head Librarian, Cubberly Education Library, and the archivists of the Stanford Library Collections, for their assistance with this paper.

#### □ About RPI

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